

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/788,664
Reply to Office Action dated December 6, 2005

Remarks:

Applicants have read and considered the Office Action dated December 6, 2005 and the references cited therein. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 8-16 have now been amended. Claims 2, 4 and 6-7 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 8-16 are currently pending.

In the Action, claims 1-6 and 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gelhard. In addition, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Toda et al. Claims 1-3, 11-13 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by either of the World patents to Gauthier or Manclark. Finally, claims 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over either of the World patents to Manclark or Gauthier. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections over the prior art.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the features of claim 7, which was indicated as having allowable subject matter. Applicants assert that claim 1 and claims 3, 5, 8-9 and 11-16 are therefore allowable. In addition, claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form and is believed to be allowable.

Claims 7-10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been rewritten to include the subject matter of claim 7 and any intervening claims and is therefore believed to be allowable. In addition, claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants assert that claims 1 and 10 are therefore allowable and the claims depending therefrom are also allowable for these reasons as well as others. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

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A speedy and favorable action on the merits is hereby solicited. If the Examiner feels that a telephone interview may be helpful in this matter, please contact Applicants' Representative at (612) 336-4728.



Dated: 6/6/06

Respectfully submitted,
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.

By: A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory A. Sebald".

Gregory A. Sebald
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GAS/km